


AN ADDRESS
TO
HEADS OF SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES;
POINTING OUT,
Under the Sanction of the most respectable Authorities,
THE NECESSITY FOR
A REFORMATION
IN THE
MODERN SYSTEM OF EDUCATION
IN THE
HIGHER AND MIDDLE STATIONS,
AS FAR AS THE
INTERESTS OF RELIGION ARE CONCERNED;
And offering to Consideration
A SET OF BOOKS

Designed as Helps towards the Accomplishment of this desirable End.

BY SARAH TRIMMER.

N.B. Persons disposed to favour the Views of the Writer, by dispersing the following Address in Schools, may be supplied with Copies *gratis*, by Messrs. F. and C. RIVINGTON, St. Paul's Church-Yard.


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AN ADDRESS.

THE following Books are respectfully offered to the consideration of PARENTS who educate their children at home, and MASTERS and GOVERNESSES of Boarding Schools.

For the use of Schools and Families.

1. AN ABRIDGMENT OF SCRIPTURE HISTORY, consisting of Lessons selected from the OLD TESTAMENT, price 2s. bound.
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The design of these Books collectively, is, to teach the Principles of Revealed Religion as a regular branch of early education, by means of *Selections from the SCRIPTURES*.

The *Lessons* are intended to be read by the *Scholars*; the *Explanation* of these Lessons, which is in the *catechetical form*, is for the use of *Teachers*, and calculated to convey to the minds of children, in the style of familiar conversation, a general knowledge of the divine Dispensations which were preparatory to the coming of the Messiah, and a more particular one of CHRISTIANITY itself—To enforce the practice of that *pure MORALITY* which is no where to be found in perfection, but in the NEW TESTAMENT—and to implant in the uncorrupted heart an earnest desire to be more fully instructed in the only science which leads to a happy immortality*.

That great improvement in the modern system of education is necessary, as far as it relates to RELIGION, has been strongly pointed out by writers of the first eminence. A few extracts from some of their valuable Works must convince the unprejudiced mind, that this is actually the case, and will furnish the best apology which can be made for this Address.

“Let all parents, while they are so anxious to embellish the manners and improve the understandings of their children, pay a little more attention than they have hitherto done to the cultivation of their hearts. From their infancy to their manhood, let them be brought up *in the nurture and fear of the Lord*. Let those grand corruptors of their unguarded innocence and simplicity, licentious NOVELS, HISTORIES, and systems of PHILOSOPHY, which (not to mention those of our own growth) have constituted a large and most pernicious branch of commerce with a neighbouring kingdom; let these, I say, be for ever banished from the hands of our youth, and in their room, let that long neglected and almost forgotten thing, REVEALED RELIGION, make a fundamental part of their Education. Let them not be left (as is too much, God knows, the case) to pick it up themselves, as well as they can, from casual information, or a few superficial unconnected instructions; but let it be taught them systematically and methodically; let the first rudiments of it be instilled as early and as carefully into their minds, as those of every other science; let its evidences and its doctrines be gradually explained to them in the several seminaries of learning, through which they successively pass, in proportion as their judgments ripen, and their understandings unfold them-

* Such Parents and Heads of Schools as have adopted the Author's larger Work, entitled *Sacred History*, will, it is presumed, find these books useful as *preparatory* to it. The Catechism, indeed, may be used *with* the *Sacred History*.

“ selves. Let them, in short, be made, not only great scholars and accomplished gentlemen, but, what is of infinitely more importance both to themselves and to the public, honest men and sincere Christians.” Sermons by the present bishop of London, vol. i. p. 259.

“ In the instruction of persons whom we believe to be destined to survive the stroke of death, and to survive in happiness or in misery proportioned to the nature of their conduct in this short and preparatory scene of existence, the main object to be pursued, is, to inspire them with such views of things, to establish in them such principles and rules of action, as are calculated to render that future and most important state of being, a period of blessedness. Such would still be the dictates of reason, had the result been likely to be unfavourable to happiness in the present life. How forcibly, then, do they press upon those who are convinced, as is the case with all who believe in the Christian Revelation, that *godliness has the promise of the life which now is, as well as of that which is to come*: that the very same views of things, the very same principles and rules of action which lead to never-ending felicity hereafter, promise in the common course of events a larger portion of external comforts than is attainable by any other means, and are accompanied by a serenity of heart, and by a cheerful sense of the protecting care of infinite Power, Wisdom, and Goodness, which far more than outweigh the collected amount of all other terrestrial enjoyments. The chief solicitude, therefore, of every one who is called to fulfil the duties of tuition ought to be this: to engage the understanding and the affections of the Pupil in favour of piety and virtue, by unfolding the truth, the importance, and the inherent excellence of the Christian Religion; and by inculcating the obligations of morality, not as ultimately resting on principles of their own, but as founded on the precepts and sanctions of the Gospel, and forming one branch of human duty to God.” *Gisborne's Inquiry into the Duties of the Female Sex*, page 41.

“ From the result of such inquiries as I have been able to make on the subject, it appears that in the generality of public Seminaries and Boarding Schools, this momentous object of religious instruction is by no means pursued either with proper earnestness or in a judicious manner; and that in *some*, the attention which it occupies merits no better appellation than that of form, and serves only to impose on the Parents of the children who are placed there, and to fill the young mind with contempt, or at least with unconcern, as to the most awful of all considerations.

“ The usual defect in judgment, in the manner of impressing the principles and injunctions of Christianity, appears to me to consist in these two circumstances. First, they are commonly inculcated in the form of a dry and authoritative lecture, without being applied and illustrated in such a method as to create a deeply-rooted conviction of the influence they claim over every period of, and every action of life, or to interest the affections of the opening mind; whence religion is rather dreaded as an austere monitor and a relentless judge, than loved as the giver of present and future happiness. Secondly, they are presented to the understanding rather as truths to be implicitly received on the credit of the teacher, and on the ground of their established prevalence, than as truths resting on the solid basis of fact and argument, and inviting at all times the closest investigation of their certainty which the mind is capable of bestowing. Hence when a young woman* begins to act for herself on the stage of

* This observation is equally applicable to youth of the other sex.

"life, and a growing confidence in her own judgment, together with the
 "effects of new scenes and situations which incidentally arise, lessens the
 "estimation in which she once held the opinion of her instructors; it is
 "scarcely possible, but her regard for religion, which, whether greater or
 "less, was in a considerable degree derived from that estimation, must at
 "the same time be impaired. And if she should be thrown, as in these
 "days of widely extended intercourse is not very improbable, into habits of
 "familiarity with persons who in practice slight some of the injunctions of
 "the Gospel, or who doubt or disbelieve its divine origin; is it wonderful
 "that her faith should waver, when she feels herself at once allured by
 "temptations, and unable to give one satisfactory reason for crediting the
 "Book which commands her to resist them?"—Ibid. page 50.

The Reader is requested to refer to the excellent Work itself, from which these extracts are taken, for further observations on this important subject.

It would be presumptuous in the writer of this Address to add any arguments of her own to such high authorities, in favour of Religious Instruction, but she begs indulgence for a few observations concerning the manner of conveying it.

It is observed by the Author last quoted, that "when young persons are educated at home, the article of Religious Instruction generally occupies more attention than it obtains in Schools, and is conducted with greater judgment." This remark is certainly well founded; but it is become so much the practice of the age to send children, as soon as they are capable of learning any thing, to *Boarding Schools*, that very few, in comparison, remain under the tuition of their Parents beyond the first years of infancy; and though some have the benefit of Religious Instruction before they leave home, and in the school vacations, it is to be feared, that by far the greater number are consigned to the care of others, without any previous knowledge of this kind, or any solicitude on the part of the Parents upon this most important subject; and that, instead of taking advantage of those intervals, during which they might instil many important truths, and give much good exhortation, they contribute to fill their children's heads with vanity by an ostentatious display of their ornamental acquirements, and lead them into a love of dissipating amusements by improper indulgences, which make every thing that is serious appear in a disgusting light. It is therefore to the *Master or Governess*, that the generality of children in the higher and middling classes are to look chiefly for all that relates to their *eternal interests*; nor can it be doubted, but that many respectable characters on whom the task of tuition devolves, particularly those of the *sacred order*, discharge it with a conscientious regard to duty; and that when Parents co-operate with their pious endeavours, the happiest effects are produced. It would likewise be doing great injustice to *Masters and Governesses* of Schools in general, not to allow, that regard is paid by them to Religious Instruction. Morning and Evening Prayers, attendance upon Public Worship, and Catechizing, are amongst the established customs of Schools, introduced in better times, and which fashion has not yet abolished. The Scriptures are also read in most Schools, if not daily, at least on Sunday Evenings. But if a judgment may be formed, from the deficiency of the generality of young people who have been educated upon this plan, it must be acknowledged, that these well-intended means are not adequate to the end, and that the RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE is not sufficiently cultivated in Schools to guard our youth from the contagion of bad example or infidel books; for how few do we find in polite circles, who are well grounded in the CHRISTIAN FAITH, or who have acquired the habit of applying the SCRIPTURES to themselves

themselves as **THE RULE OF MORAL CONDUCT** ! In short, what branch of knowledge is so little understood in this enlightened age (as many affect to call it) as the Divine Science of true Wisdom ?

In order to check the progress of the national corruption, which has of late years increased to a most alarming degree, it is certainly requisite to attend assiduously to the rising generation, since so much depends upon first impressions and early habits ; and it must be allowed, that never was greater attention paid to the religious instruction of *the children of the poor* than at present ; but little will it avail towards a general reformation of principles and manners in the nation, that those who are destined to fill the lower offices of life are carefully instructed in the knowledge and practice of their duty, if young persons of the higher classes, who are growing up with them, be left in ignorance of those heavenly doctrines which are absolutely necessary to teach them how to perform their part as Christians, and how to confirm their domestics and dependants in virtuous habits by their own good advice and exemplary conduct. The office then of the *Master or Governess of a Boarding School* is amongst the most important in society, for upon them it in a great measure depends whether the rising generation shall be Christians or Infidels, good or bad members of the community. Masters and Governesses of Day Schools are also responsible to the Public, though in a less degree, for the principles and conduct of youth, since they have great opportunities of disposing the minds of their Pupils to piety and virtue.

The indifference of Parents in respect to Religious Knowledge, and the unreasonable desire which many have that their children should attain to the highest degree of excellence in exterior accomplishments, throw great difficulties, it must be confessed, in the way of those who have a large number of Scholars. The different branches which now constitute a polite and liberal education occupy a considerable portion of time, and Parents whose views, unhappily for themselves and their offspring, are bounded by the trifles of this mortal state, would probably grudge the time requisite for *Sacred Studies*.—To gratify them, the Song and the Dance must be learnt to perfection, that their children may shine in the fashionable world ; while that heavenly science, which alone can harmonize the soul, and fit it for the society of angels, is forgotten !—Let us, however, hope that the number of Parents who have thus lost sight of their children's highest interests is comparatively small. But were all who place their children in Boarding Schools of the same mistaken sentiments, no earthly Parent, nor any human authority whatever, can absolve the Master or Governess from the duty they respectively owe to **THE GREAT PARENT OF THE UNIVERSE**, to whom they are accountable for the Religious Instruction of every child committed to their care ; or from their obligation to the children, to bring them up in the way of Salvation, according to the solemn Promise and Vow made in their Name at their Baptism. For their own sakes therefore, as well as from a regard to the good of their Pupils, all who engage in the business of tuition should form a resolution, and steadfastly adhere to it, to *please God rather than Men*, and discharge their own consciences in defiance of the discontent of unreasonable people. Nor would a professed regard to the Interests of Religion eventually lessen the number of Scholars in a School ; on the contrary, it must tend to heighten the confidence of pious Parents, many of whom would probably prefer a School education for their children under Teachers of the above description, but are fearful of placing them where they are in danger of being brought up in ignorance of their duty ; and many others, who are remiss in their own practice, have

no dislike to their children being taught the Principles of Christianity, though they are too indifferent to the concerns of another life, to make it a principal object.

With such a disposition to educate children in the practice of Religious Duties, as may reasonably be inferred from the attention of the Conductors of Schools to Daily Prayers, and other particulars before noticed, little more appears wanting to effect the desired reform in the modern system of education, than to fix upon such a method of initiating children into the knowledge of the Truths of Divine Revelation, as may render the study of Religion pleasing to them, and leave time for other pursuits. This is the precise Point aimed at in the Publications in question; how far they will answer the intended purpose must be left to the test of experience; and most thankfully will the Projector of it accept of hints from persons of judgment for its improvement.

To teach Revealed Religion without the immediate use of the Scriptures has been found a very imperfect method. *Histories of the Bible*, as they are called, consisting of the principal events recorded in Holy Writ, related in the language of other *School Books*, though very useful to be read to children while they are capable of *oral instruction* only, or to refresh the memories of those who have previously read the Bible*, are by no means calculated to teach the Doctrines of Christianity. Neither can this latter purpose be answered by collections of *Divine and Moral Precepts*, however methodically arranged; for the Historical and Doctrinal Parts are so intimately connected, and so admirably blended together, in the *Sacred Volume*, especially in the *New Testament*, that they cannot be separated, without losing in a great measure their intended effect. On the other hand, the usual practice in Schools of reading the Bible from beginning to end, has often led children, from the difficulties attending it, to a distaste of the Scriptures; but nothing can justify so dangerous an experiment as that which is sometimes made of laying the BIBLE entirely aside, in order to gain time for other studies, and trusting to the future researches of maturer years, which accident may possibly induce, but which it is most probable will never be thought of. SELECTION then seems to be the only method which can be adopted to obviate the foregoing objections, and to avoid any considerable derangement of the usual Plan of School Instruction, such selection as shall comprise not only the principal historical events of the *Old and New Testament*, but all the *Doctrines of Christianity* relating to *Faith and Practice*; all, at least, which are necessary for young persons to understand before they take upon themselves their *Baptismal Vow*. But *Selection* alone will not be sufficient, for it cannot be expected that children, if left to themselves, will make proper reflections upon what they read, or that they will have patience to study voluminous commentaries; it is therefore absolutely necessary that their Scripture Lessons should be explained and enforced by their Teachers. To prepare this Explanation would occupy more time than the Conductors of large Seminaries can command; and few people who have a variety of things to attend to, would choose to trust to extempore explanations, which they might not at all times be capable of giving. Under the idea that something is wanting to supply the place of extempore instruction in Boarding Schools, Day Schools, and private Families, the Writer of this Address, having repeatedly experienced the indulgence of the Public, is encouraged to step forwards once more with the result of her labours, hoping, that as RELIGION

* A Work of this kind has been published by the Compiler of the Book now offered to consideration; but it was intended chiefly to illustrate a Series of Prints of *Scripture History*, as forming a Part of *Universal History*.

is the great concern of ALL, the Books, which have obtained the sanction of persons of undoubted judgment, for the use of the Poor *, will be received with candour by those who are concerned in the education of children in superior stations; and that a trial at least will be made of them. It may be proper to add, in respect to the manner of using these Books, that when children can read fluently, it will be adviseable to direct them to study, by themselves, every day in the intervals between the school hours, a certain portion of the Scripture Lessons, and to let them hear the Explanation read by the *Principal of the School* at any convenient time in the day. The Questions may be passed over, excepting on Sundays, and the usual catechising days, when a general examination may take place; but no opportunity should be lost of convincing children of the inestimable value and infinite importance of the Holy Scriptures, or of reminding them that the principal concern of this life is to prepare for a better. As part of the Sunday employment, the Pupils may be directed to read and consider the Book of Common Prayer †, and various parts of the poetical and devotional Books of the Bible, which contain instructions particularly suited to young people; such, for instance, as the 2d, 3d, and 4th Chapters of Proverbs, and many others, which the Teacher will readily select. The reading of these would answer a much better purpose than learning whole chapters by heart by way of task. In short, the utmost care should be taken to make this Branch of Instruction as easy and pleasant as possible, that Religion may appear to the unprejudiced mind in her own lovely and inviting form. Conductors of Boarding Schools would find themselves amply repaid for any additional trouble which might devolve upon them from attending particularly to this important branch of Education, by the influence of the RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLE upon the minds and manners of the Pupils, which would do more towards promoting order and good behaviour in large Seminaries, than any coercive measures whatever; and nothing but the careful cultivation of THIS PRINCIPLE can prevent the growth of those bad propensities which are often found in children whose education has been neglected, and which frequently take deep root in the mind, and lead to great irregularities of conduct at an early period of life.

One thing more the Writer of this Address is anxious to recommend to the Heads of Schools, and that is, to prepare their Pupils, and take them at stated times, to be examined at Church by the Parish Minister, as Catechumens gradually advancing towards the period of *Confirmation*, and who, after that rite has been administered to them, are to partake of the *Holy Sacrament of the LORD'S SUPPER*. Such examinations, twice in the year for instance, would answer several good purposes, by exciting a proper emulation in the Pupils to attain to a proficiency in Religious Knowledge proportionable to their years—by affording a good example to children of inferior condition—and by restoring the almost forgotten connexion betwixt children in the middling and higher ranks and their spiritual Pastors. If ever there was a time when it was particularly necessary to attend to these things, it is now; when such daring and open attempts are made by infidel writers to invalidate the authenticity of the Holy Scriptures, to destroy Christianity, and establish the flimsy systems of pretended Philosophy in the room of that pure Religion which the Son of God came down from heaven to reveal.

* The Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

† A Companion to the Common Prayer was published by the Writer of this Address some time ago, for the use of Scholars and Teachers.—See the List of Books prefixed to this Address.